textile industry including the weaving and processing sector. The intended objective is to improve production and productivity of the Indian textile industry to make it more competitive, including in the export market. Details of a Technology Upgradation Fund for textiles and Jute industires are being worked out in this regard. As regards sericulture and wool, upgradation of processing facilities have been identified as thrust areas to be taken up during the 9th Five Year Plan Period, and schemes for this purpose are presently under formulation.

[English]

Achievements by NRF

6476. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Renewal Fund has failed in its objectives of availing jobs for rationalized workmen;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the gist of its achievements during the last three years ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. Assistance from National Renewal Fund which has been set up to provide a social safety net for rationalised workers, affected by industrial restructuring, is being provided at present, for voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) in Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) and counselling, retraining and redeployment assistance to rationalised workers in the organised sector.

As on 31.3.97, 1,04,299 workers have opted for Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) in the Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs). Additionally, 30,433 rationalised workers have been counselled, 22,925 retrained and 5962 redeployed by the Employee Assistance Centres (EACs) set up under NRF.

Exploitation of Catechu Reserves

6477. SHRI R.L.P. VERMA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that Kodarma District of Bihar has huge reserves of Catechu and whether the Government are suffering loss worth lakhs of rupees daily due to the exploitation of Catechu reserves by the Catechu Mafia;

(b) if so, whether the Government are taking any concrete steps to prevent the theft of natural Catechu of this area by the Catechu Mafia;

(c) whether the Government propose to launch any Special Campaign for the export of the Catechu deposited in this area; and

(d) if so, the details thereof

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Import of Raw Material

6478 SHRI A. SAMPATH : Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a shortage of materials for the utilisation of Non-Conventional Energy Sources in the country;

(b) if so, the measures being taken by the Government to make it cheaper and easily available;

(c) whether majority of material have to be imported for the use in this sector;

(d) if so, the amount spent on import of Non-Conventional Energy materials during the last three years; and

(e) the measures taken/being taken by the Government to reduce the import and encourage the domestic production of these items ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (CAPT. JAI NARAYAN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) to (e) Presently, certain raw materials required for the manufacture of high technology based Non-conventional Energy Systems/ devices such as solar PV cells/modules and number of critical components, assemblies and sub-assemblies required for the manufacture of wind turbine equipments, are being imported. These imports are necessary due to the requirement of high-purity and specialised materials and shortfall in actual domestic production of these materials compared to their demand. At present, the import content in solar photovoltaic modules is about 45% and in wind electric generators is 50-60%. It is estimated that the amount spent on the import of materials/components for use by the manufacturers and promoters of Non-conventional Energy equipments/projects in the last three years has been a round Rs. 1500 crores.

In order to encourage domestic production and to ensure cheap and easy availability of various key raw materials and components required for the generation and utilisation of non-conventional energy sources, the Govern-

ment have announced schemes for grant of financial support to take up research and development, technology upgradation and the setting up of pilot plant production facilities. In addition, Government is providing soft loan assistance to industries for the expansion of existing units and the setting up of new units for production of silicon for use in solar cells. The Ministry has taken up a technology development plan for indigenous production of wind energy equipment and to encourage complete indigenisation of wind electric generators.

National Renewal Fund

6479. SHRI SAMIK LAHIRI : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have considering to sanction Rs. 10 crore from National Renewal Fund to New Central Jute Mill, Budge Budge, West Bengal as prescribed in the package by BIFR; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. Assistance from National Renewal Fund is presently restricted only to Voluntary Retirement Scheme in Central Public Sector Undertakings and to the schemes for counselling, retraining and redeployment assistance to rationalised workers.

Supply of Yarn to Weavers of Assam

6480. SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that weavers in Assam are suffering a lot due to non availability of yarn in time; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to provide yarn to weavers of the State ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) : (a) and (b) Though no such reports have been received from Government of Assam, the Government is implementing Mill Gate Price Scheme through National Handloom Development Corporation with the objective to make available quality yarn, at reasonable price to handloom weavers in the country, including the weavers of Assam.

Purchase of Coir Items

6481. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is considering the request of Government of Kerala to direct all the departments to buy coir products and furnishing items from the Coir Board/Coir Co-operative societies and other small-scale coir industries in Kerala to save the traditional Coir Manufacturers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and other steps being taken to save the coir industry of Kerala ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b) In order to encourage the use of coir and coir products manufactured by small scale manufacturers and cooperative societies, the Government vide its letter dated March 13th, 1996 have requested all the State Governments, Union Territories, Central Government departments, public sector undertakings to instruct the concerned offices/organisations/institutions under their administrative control to make their purchase of coir and coir products from the Coir Board's showrooms and sales depots without inviting tenders/quotations.

(c) Does not arise.

Use of AZO Dyes

6482. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Germany had imposed ban on the printing of cotton clothes in AZO dyes in January, 1996;

(b) if so, whether the textile printing industry of Rajasthan has suffered a jolt as a result of the said ban;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government of Rajasthan had requested for setting up an Eco-laboratory Research and Development Centre for the textile industry; and

(e) if so, the action taken so far in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) : (a) Yes Sir. Germany has banned production and import of textiles dyed and printed with specific AZO dyes which release any of the twenty harmful amines. This ban has already come into force with effect from 1st April, 1996.

(b) to (e) The textile trade, industry and exporters all over the country including Rajasthan are affected by the ban imposed by Germany. However, a proposal was received from Government of Rajasthan for setting up a Research and Development Centre for testing of textiles printed with azo dyes. The Government has taken necessary steps to upgrade the laboratory of Textiles Committee at Jaipur in Rajasthan for providing various eco-testing equipments required by the textile industry in Rajasthan.